GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2317
ANSWERED ON:15.12.2004
DELAY IN CONSTRUCTION OF CHANCERIES ABROAD
Baxla Shri Joachim

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether inordinate delay has been noticed in the construction of chanceries abroad as reported in the first report of Standing Committee on External Affairs, Lok Sabha;

(b) if so, the details thereof mentioning the names of the projects abroad that got delayed;

(c) the details of the reasons for the said delay; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure that work is completed on scheduled time and rushing in with expenditure in the last quarter does not occur?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (RAO INDERJIT SINGH)

(a), (b), (c) and (d) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in parts (a) to (d) of the reply to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2317 for answer on 15.12.2004

(a), (b), (c) & (d): Government attaches high priority to the expeditious completion of planned construction projects of chanceries abroad and is moving resolutely to achieve this goal. Efforts in this regard have been intensified and substantive progress has been made over the last two years whereby the projects have moved to satisfactory levels of planning and execution.

The Ministry has successfully completed construction projects for Embassy complexes in Berlin and Abu Dhabi, a Cultural Centre in Mauritius and Embassy Residence in Gaborone. The remaining construction projects are in varying stages of implementation. Details of various construction projects abroad, giving their present status, are enclosed at Annexure-A. Of the 20 construction projects, financial approval has been obtained for projects in six stations namely Beijing, Doha, Geneva, Muscat, Singapore and Trinidad & Tobago, and further steps are being taken for their implementation. Agreements have been signed with consultants/architects for projects such as Abuja, Brasilia, Kathmandu, Islamabad, Kyiv, Moscow, etc. Proposals pertaining to these projects are being processed for finalization of the design and cost estimates for obtaining necessary financial approvals.

While it has been an earnest endeavour of the Ministry to implement the various construction projects abroad in a timely manner, certain projects have not progressed at the desired pace for a variety of reasons beyond the control of the Ministry. The numerous procedures involved, both in stations abroad where the Mission is governed by local laws, rules and regulations, and in processing approvals within the Government, have also contributed to unavoidable delays. Some of the projects which have got delayed and the reasons for their delay are enumerated below:

In the case of Brasilia, the plot was gifted by the Government of Brazil in 1965, but due to introduction of economy measures on account of Bangladesh war and oil crisis of 1970's, unstable economic situation in Brazil in 1980's and foreign exchange crisis of 1990's the project could not be pursued. In the case of Doha, the delay occurred due to the Gulf war and freeze on overseas projects due to prevailing foreign exchange crunch of 1990's. Subsequently, the local government withdrew the plot allotted in 1977. Since then, we have been pursuing the matter with the government of Qatar, who have informed that a new plot is likely to be allotted to us in the new diplomatic enclave in mid 2005. The Islamabad and Kabul projects could not be pursued due to political reasons but are now back on track. Moscow and Warsaw also saw some political upheavals in late 80s/ early 90s and the foreign exchange crisis also played a role in putting these projects on the backburner for some time. In Tashkent, though the plot was allotted in 1989, vacant possession of the plot was obtained only in 2004. Muscat project also suffered due to the foreign exchange crunch of the 1990s. Even though financial approval has been obtained for this project, fresh approvals would need to be sought due to the tendered cost exceeding the approved cost.

Despite the above delays for reasons beyond the control of the Ministry, efforts are being made in earnest to expedite construction of Chanceries abroad. Government remains committed to its goal of timely implementation of construction projects abroad.

ANNEXURE 'A'

Ministry of External Affairs

Establishment Division

Construction Projects Abroad

Station	Project	Present Status
Abuja	Construction of Chancery and Embassy Residence	Foundation stone laid by PM on December 5, 2003. Contract with M/s. C.P. Kukreja Associates, Architects signed on January 9, 2004. Cost estimate of project put up for approval of Standing Finance Committee of the Ministry.
Beijing	Construction of Chancery and Residences	Contract signed with M/s Raj Rewal Associates as Architect-Consultant. Financial approval obtained in July, 2003. Local contracts signed by Mission in March, 2004. Local body approvals are being processed in Beijing. While giving first stage approval (concept design stage) Chinese authorities have proposed to shift the main entry towards the side road to fulfil local traffic requirements. Efforts are being made to resolve this issue and expedite second stage approvals from various local authorities in consultation with the Mission and Chinese authorities.
Brasilia	Chancery, Embassy Residence and Officers Residences	Design of M/s. Paranhos selected on Sept., 30,2003. Contract with Architect has been signed in August, 2004. The consultant is preparing preliminary designs and preliminary estimates incorporating suggestions of the Ministry.
Dar-Es-Salaam	Construction of Chancery	Foreign Secretary has approved appointment of consultant for the project and a draft agreement has been sent to the consultant for his comments.
Dhaka	Construction of Chancery and Residences	Concept designs of five short-listed architects were examined by the Design Selection Committee and out of them two have been further short-listed with suggestions for modifications. The next meeting of Project Design Selection Committee is scheduled to take place shortly to finalize the design.
Doha	Construction of Chancery and Embassy Residence	Approved by Ministry of Finance in October, 2001. Unfortunately, delay has occurred because local government has shifted the site of land allocated to India. The HOM has taken up the matter of allotment of an alternate plot with the Qatar Government at the highest level. The Qatar government has informed that a plot in the new diplomatic enclave is likely to be allotted in 2005.
Geneva	Renovation of PR's Residence	Contract with Consultant signed in June 2004. Tender documents have been prepared and process of selecting a contractor has been initiated.
Islamabad	Construction of Residences	Contract signed with M/s Sachdeva Architects. Property team visited Islamabad in May 2004 and the Architect revised design concept as suggested by Capital Construction Deptt. of Islamabad.

		Some further revisions were required which are being implemented by the consultant. Once this is done, the revised design will be submitted to the local authorities for their approval by our Mission.
Kabul	Construction of Chancery and Residences	CPWD has recently submitted preliminary cost estimates and preliminary drawings for approval.
Kathmandu	Construction of Chancery and Residences	Contract signed with M/s. Akshaya Jain and Raka Chakravarty as Architects in April 2004. The architect has submitted the drawings and preliminary estimates which have been put up for CNE approval.
Kyiv	Demolition and reconstruction of residences	Contract with the local architect has been signed by Mission in June 2004. The architect has been requested to submit preliminary cost estimates and preliminary drawings for approval of the Ministry.
London	Construction of 6 residences in 8 South Audley Street	The agreement has been signed with the consultant, M/s Axis Mason, by Mission in July 2004. The issue of appointment of surveyors for Rights to Light & Party wall matters to deal with the adjoining neighbours, is being examined.
Moscow	Construction of Residences and School	Contract signed with the consultant, M/s Consulting Engineering Services Ltd. Proposal for financial approval was submitted to Ministry of Finance who has sought some clarifications which have been carried out. Cabinet note (as the project cost exceeds Rs.100 crores) will be prepared after CNE Note is approved by Ministry of Finance. Meanwhile we have been informed by the Mission that the Russian authorities have proposed an alternative plot of land which is under consideration.
Muscat	Construction of Chancery and Embassy Residence	Contract signed with M/s Babbar & Babbar as Architect-Consultants. Tender documents for award of construction contract was floated but the tendered amount turned out to be more than that approved by the Ministry of Finance. Negotiations were held with the lowest bidder but the offer could not be brought down to match the approved cost of the project. The consultant has been asked to redraw the cost estimates and fresh tenders will be floated.
Paramaribo	Construction of Indian Cultural Centre	Short-listing of consultants is in process.
Port Louis	Construction of chancery complex	The Mauritian Government has offered an alternative plot of land. A property team is to visit shortly to take a decision in the matter.
Singapore	Redevelopment of Embassy Residence, Construction of two residences.	Contract signed with local consultant. Financial approval has been received from Ministry of Finance in October, 2004 with certain observations which are being complied with.
Tashkent	Construction of Embassy Residence, Chancery and Residences	Contract signed with Mr. Romi Khosla as Consultant. Preliminary Design and cost estimates submitted by Consultant needed further clarifications/ revision. Action is being taken in consultation with the consultant.
Trinidad	Construction of Cultural Centre	Financial approval obtained in May 2003. Revised

& Tobago	drawings being finalised by local architect.	
Warsaw	Construction of Chancery and Residences	Contract signed with M/s Sachdeva Eggleston as Architects. Financial proposal being processed with competent authorities.